

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The action by the Examiner of this application, together with the references cited by him, have been given careful consideration. Following such consideration, claim 3 has been amended to define more clearly the patentable invention Applicant believes is disclosed herein. Claims 4 and 7-9 are unchanged. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form, together with the following comments, and allow the application.

As the Examiner well knows, the present invention relates to a buckle for use on a rucksack (a type of knapsack carried by hikers, bicyclists, etc.). Such sacks typically include relatively tough straps or webbing that have little flexibility. The present invention is a buckle for use on such sacks and allows easy attachment to a captive loop of a strap or webbing. In this respect, the buckle includes a planar securing portion having a first aperture and a second aperture formed therein. The first aperture is dimensioned to allow bending or twisting of the webbing within the first aperture so as to allow the second aperture to easily capture another portion of the webbing. More specifically, when a buckle of the present invention is used, the edge of a captive loop of webbing is guided into the first aperture 34 by guiding the webbing through web passage 36. With the webbing within the first aperture 34, first arm 28 and second arm 38 both lie between the front and back portions of the captive loop, as illustrated in FIG. 3B of the application. Because the first aperture 34 is relatively large in comparison to the relatively narrow web passageway 36, the loop of strap (webbing) is prevented from accidentally slipping out of the first aperture. Moreover, the relatively large first aperture 34 allows the buckle to be twisted relative to the strap (webbing) to bring the second arm in front of another portion of the webbing or strap. This portion of the strap is then slid into the second aperture 40 thereby locking the strap (webbing) into the second aperture 40.

As indicated above, the first aperture is dimensioned to allow the buckle to be twisted or bent relative to the strap or webbing. Stated another way, the first aperture is dimensioned to allow the webbing or strap to bend or twist within the first aperture. This allows the buckle to be easily attached to the loop of webbing, as illustrated in FIGS. 3A-3D of the present invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited references, alone or together, teaches, suggests or shows the invention as presently claimed. In response to the Examiner's objections, claim 1 has been amended to define a "*planar* securing portion," and to indicate that the first aperture is "dimensioned to allow twisting of webbing therein."

Claim 3 has been rejected primarily in view of U.S. Patent No. 837,103 to Nonnemacher. The '103 patent discloses a support device for attaching garments, namely men's hose. In this respect, the '103 patent refers to attaching an elastic band to the support device. Thus, the device disclosed in the '103 patent is for use with straps that have a certain degree of elasticity, wherein the straps can be manipulated relatively easily to facilitate attachment thereto. Applicant respectfully submits that the cited reference does not teach, suggest or show a buckle capable of attachment to a relatively rigid strap or webbing, as disclosed in the present invention.

More specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the support device disclosed in the '103 patent does not include a "*planar* securing portion." In this respect, the '103 patent discloses: "the end of limb b^3 of the loop-shaped member B is bent outwardly slightly, as shown at b^6 , to facilitate the passage of the elastic into said seat." (See FIG. 2 and lines 57-60 of the '103 patent). In this respect, the '103 patent does not show a "*planar* securing portion."

Still further, the '103 patent does not show a first aperture "dimensioned to allow twisting of webbing therein." In this respect, slots b^2 and b^4 are long, narrow slots that would not allow twisting or bending of the straps therein.

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RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION dated December 20, 2004

In summary, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited reference does not teach, suggest or show a buckle suitable for use in fastening the relatively rigid straps or webbing found on rucksacks. The cited references do not teach, suggest or show a "planar securing portion," and do not teach, suggest or show a first aperture that is "dimensioned to allow twisting of webbing therein" so as to allow manipulation of the buckle relative to the webbing to enable the second aperture 40 to capture the webbing.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims in their present form are distinguishable from the cited references, and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence (along with any paper referenced as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited on the below date with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to MAIL STOP AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: March 18, 2005


Christine Goellner